Ethics on Demand – Sexual Misconduct

Article: [Toronto doctor loses licence after she admits to sexual relationship with cancer patient](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/doctor-license-relationsip-theepa-sundaralingam-1.4990346)

What was the situation?

An oncology doctor is treating a cancer patient. The doctor and patient engage in flirting, which at first seems harmless. The patient meets the doctor over the course of a few months. The flirting evolves into consensual sexual touching and eventually intercourse. The rendezvouses occur at the hospital or at the patient's home. During their affair, the doctor continues to treat the patient. Seven months after the affair started, the doctor ends the affair and refuses to continue treating the patient. The doctor appears at a disciplinary hearing at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario on allegations of professional misconduct, which results in the doctor losing her licence and being ordered to pay therapy fees and court costs.

What went wrong?

Sexual misconduct Discrimination Lack of morality Lack of professional responsibility

Using the Code of Ethics

The [CSMLS Code of Ethics](https://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Our-Members/Code-of-Ethics.aspx) serves to define and expand the inherent ethical concepts contained in the [CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct](https://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Our-Members/Code-of-Conduct.aspx), document expectations of ethical behaviour for all medical laboratory professionals and provide a framework during professional and personal self-evaluation. Consider how adhering to these codes could have prevented the situation. What other codes are applicable?

*Code of Ethics*

* 4.3 Be responsible for the quality, integrity and reliability of the laboratory services one provides.
* 5.3 Encourage the trust and confidence of the public through high standards of professional competence, conduct and deportment.
* 5.4 Be reasonably accessible within the confines of your duties.

*Code of Professional Conduct*

* Medical laboratory professionals are dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of the public. The welfare of the patient and respect for the dignity of the individual shall be paramount at all times.
* Medical laboratory professionals shall promote the image and status of their profession by maintaining high standards in their professional practice and through active support of their professional bodies.
* Medical laboratory professionals shall take responsibility for their professional acts.

Relevant Articles

[Ontario eye doctor could lose medical license after alleged affair with live-in nanny who was also his patient](https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/jeffrey-gale)